

Petition update

Bailiwick News reporting on Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan, plus July 20 Right to Know Workshop

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Nittany Valley Environmental Coalition

State College, PA, United States

Jul 2, 2018 — On June 29, Bailiwick News published the first in a series of reports about the Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan update process.

Excerpts and link to full report below.

Also, Bailiwick News Publisher Katherine Watt will be presenting a free, one-hour workshop - "User's Guide to the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law" - on Friday, July 20, at 5 p.m. at the Foxdale Village board meeting room, 500 E. Marylyn Ave. in State College.

Seating is limited to 25 people, so please RSVP directly to Katherine at kw.investigations.llc@gmail.com on or before July 15 to be added to the attendee list or, if the workshop fills up, the waiting list.

Excerpts from Bailiwick News June 29 report:

The Spring Creek Watershed Commission will host a public meeting of watershed stakeholders to begin updating the Spring Creek Watershed Action Plan on Tuesday, July 10, from 6:30 to 9 p.m. at Calvary Harvest Fields, 150 Harvest Fields Drive in Boalsburg.

The goal is for the watershed community to examine the Spring Creek Watershed Plan Phase 1 Final Report, completed in 2003, “to delete obsolete information, refresh and upgrade data, add new relevant information, incorporate government roles in addressing watershed issues that create legislative mandates and municipal undertaking relevant to preserving and improving the quality of the Spring Creek Watershed.”

This Bailiwick News series provides some historical background on the watershed planning process, which

stalled in 2003, and some information about the current momentum toward renewal...

The 2003 report repeatedly emphasized the importance of riparian buffers – comprised of native trees, shrubs and other vegetation growing along streambanks – particularly the need to protect mature buffers from destruction from population growth and land development.

The report stated that riparian buffers fulfill several important watershed functions: filtering nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus from wastewater treatment plants and from agricultural, urban and suburban runoff; filtering sediments; providing shade to cool stream temperatures; stabilizing streambanks from erosion (through root systems); and providing aquatic and terrestrial wildlife habitat.

The authors stressed: “Mature buffers function effectively, whereas newly planted buffers may take years to become established. Existing buffers look better than newly planted buffers. Economically, it is less costly to preserve existing buffers than to replant them.”

The problem, they noted in 2003, was that mature riparian buffer areas were being removed as land use intensified, due to a lack of legal protections for buffers, and that some individual riparian landowners were also removing or damaging their buffers.

Potential solutions clustered around preventing the destruction of mature riparian buffers and returning damaged buffers to their natural, mature state, through educating individual riparian landowners and land developers and offering incentives such as open space trading programs or density trading programs (author still researching these; preliminary research unhelpful).

Other potential solutions included direct planting of new riparian buffers and fencing streambanks in agricultural areas to keep livestock out of streams. The report highlighted Penns Valley Conservation Association as a good local model program, and identified the Centre County Conservation District (CCCD) and Chesapeake Bay Program as possible resources for funding, supplies and plants. The 2003 report suggested local volunteer groups as potential labor: Boy Scouts, civic groups, schools, etc.

The 2003 team also recommended creation of municipal riparian buffer protection ordinances or overlay zoning, and acquisition of conservation easements on riparian buffer land, or outright purchase of those parcels...

Link to full report:

<https://bailiwicknews.wordpress.com/2018/06/29/bailiwick-news-june-29-2018/>